

CHAPTER XXVI

EARLY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE EUROPEAN WAR

KOOSEVELT'S intense interest in the European War and his anxiety about the attitude of the United States toward it are revealed in many letters that he wrote in the period immediately after its outbreak. An effort was made later by his critics to show that he had been at the outset of the war friendly to the Germans and the Kaiser, but this was short lived. How baseless it was, I am able to show by the report of a conversation which Mr. E. A. Van Valkenberg, editor of the Philadelphia *North American*, had with him on Sept. 5, 1914, only a few weeks after Germany's declaration of war. Mr. Van Valkenberg wrote an account of the conversation in a letter to a friend on Sept. 8, 1914, from which I make the following extracts:

"Dean Lewis and I rode from New York to Philadelphia last Saturday afternoon with Colonel Eoosevelt.

"The Colonel, as you know, is a personal friend of the Kaiser and an ardent admirer of the Germans. There seems to be a widespread belief that he sides with Germany on this conflict. 'Germany is absolutely wrong,' was almost his first utterance after we joined him in his stateroom.

The White Paper Book, he declared, places her squarely in the wrong from which nothing she can possibly do in the future will extricate her.

"He expressed the opinion that if Germany were to subjugate England in this war, Germany would invade the United States within five years. He said he

would look
for an early alliance between Germany and
Japan in case
the power of Great Britain were broken. The
great en-
gines' of war which have been perfected by
the Kaiser's